

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 2 through 6, 9 through 14, 18, 19, 22 through 27, 57 through 64 and 68 through 94 are currently pending in the application. Claims 2 and 23 have been amended. Bases for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed and as such, no new matter has been presented. The new claims are presented herein to provide the Applicant with a scope of protection commensurate with their contribution to the art.

Applicant also thanks the Examiner for the courtesies extended in a telephonic conference with the undersigned attorney conducted on June 26, 2003. Claim 2 and U.S. Patent 4,300,865 to Murray were discussed. The Examiner contended that the previous amendment to Claims 2 and 23 were susceptible to two interpretations and as such, recommended the amendment to Claim 2 presented above. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the objections and rejections in view of the above amendments and remarks set forth below.

Allowed Subject Matter and Newly Added Claims

Applicant initially notes that Claims 9 through 14, 18, 19, 22 and 68-94 have been allowed and thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§102 & 103 & Associated Amendments

The Examiner has rejected Claims 2 through 5 and 57 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,300,865 to Murray. The Examiner has rejected Claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,300,865 to Murray in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,251,467 to Anderson. The Examiner has rejected Claims 23, 24 and 64 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,919,019 to Fischer in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,300,865 to Murray. The Examiner has rejected Claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,919,019 to Fischer in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,300,865 to Murray and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,251,467 to Anderson. The Examiner has rejected Claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,919,019 to Fischer in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,300,865 to Murray and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,179,366 to Hanz and U.S. Patent No. 5,704,753 to Ueno. The Examiner has rejected Claims 58 and 59 through 63 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,919,019 to Fischer in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,300,865 to Murray and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,179,366 to Hanz and U.S. Patent No. 5,704,753 to Ueno. These rejections are respectfully rendered moot.

Applicant initially notes that the '865 reference to Murray appears to teach a blind spring clip fastener for use with structures that are formed from materials such as fiberglass mat sheet molded compounds and as such, relatively high pull-out strength does not appear to be an issue that is addressed. More

specifically, the Murray reference appears to teach a spring clip fastener that employs wings (22) that are coupled on a single lateral side of an end segment (16a) of a corresponding leg (16).

In contrast, Claim 2 requires a retaining portion having wing members that are coupled to an insertion portion at a location between their opposite lateral edges to support each wing over its entire width and thereby improve the pull-out strength of the clip. Similarly, Claim 23 requires wing members having a base portion that is coupled to an associated flange between their opposite lateral edges. Applicant submits that Applicant's clip is neither taught nor suggested by the Murray reference, alone or in any of the above-recited combination of references, as these combinations fail to teach or suggest each and every limitation set forth in Claims 2 and 23. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and the rejection of Claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Applicant notes that Claims 3 through 6 and 57 through 63 depend from Claim 2 and as such, should be in condition for allowance for the same reasons set forth for Claim 2, above.

Applicant notes that Claims 24 through 27 and 64 depend from Claim 23 and as such, should be in condition for allowance for the same reasons set forth for Claim 23, above.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding office action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at (248) 641-1600. Prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael D. Zalobsky
Reg. No. 45,512
HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

Date: June 27, 2003,